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THE DECEMBER PIG CROP REPORT

Information broadcast by E. J. Rowell, Agricultural Marketing Service, during the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, December 26, 1939, over the NBC Blue Network.

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KADDERLY:

Today we have a report of interest to livestock farmers and to hog-raisers in particular. It's the December Pig Crop report from the Agricultural Marketing Service. "Mike" Rowell is here to tell us about it. All right, Mike.

ROWELL:

Farmers have been raising more and more hogs during the past couple of years. This upswing has continued during the past six months. This year the fall pig crop totaled about 32 million head, -- that is, about 32 million pigs were born between the first of June and the first of December. That's 4 million more than last year, and the biggest number in 17 years. Adding the spring and fall pig crops together, we find -- farmers raised about 84 million pigs this year. That's many more than they raised in 1938 and more than in any year since 1924.

But this upswing in production may be checked in 1940. Hog prices are low, and corn prices have been going up, which means that the hog-corn price ratio has been coming down. For the month ending December 15, the ratio of hog prices to corn prices made the sharpest drop for the period in 30 years. In spite of this sharp drop, farmers have not been sending their spring pigs to market as fast as usual this year. At the beginning of this month the number of hogs over six months old on farms in the Corn Belt was up 7 percent over last year.

Now, just a few words about the number of pigs that may be born next spring.

Economists in the Department expect that about the same number of sows will be farrowed next spring as last spring, - that's for the country as a whole. But some sections will have more, some less. Without going into detail, the report says -- In the North Atlantic States indications are that about the same number of sows will be farrowed next spring as last spring. In the East North Central States there may be some increase. In all other sections of the country a decrease in farrowings is likely. However, if the hog-corn price ratio continues at the present low levels, the 1940 pig crop may be smaller than now appears probable.



